



**North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
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Agency Boosts N.C. Economy with Local Grants, New Workers

RALEIGH –In the last year, the state Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services provided nearly \$3 million in federal recovery funds to local communities and assisted thousands of North Carolinians with finding jobs.

The agency awarded 21 North Carolina community rehabilitation programs a total of \$2,995,996 to increase the services they offer people with disabilities. The programs, which assist their clients with job training and placement, have recently begun to receive the funds.

Also last year, agency services resulted in 5,961 North Carolinians obtaining employment.

“Depending on their need, we may have provided these folks with counseling, training, education, or other services to help get them ready to work,” said Linda Harrington, director. “The result is we’re able to match up our consumer’s experience, skills and interest with a business’s need. That saves the employer time and money.”

Besides pre-screening, Harrington says there are other factors that give her agency’s applicants an edge with prospective employers:

- Services “stay on the job.” Agency professionals provide continuing, no-cost follow-up consultation to make sure the employee and job remain a good match.
- The agency compensates employers for providing their referral on-the-job-training. At training’s end, the employer has the option to hire the trainee as a regular employee.
- There are tax incentives for hiring people with disabilities and for adapting the workplace to accommodate a new employee’s specific disability. National data shows that often no accommodations are required in these situations. When required, accommodations can usually be met at minimal or no cost.

According to Harrington, vocational rehabilitation services are among the most cost-effective of any offered by government. She pointed to statistics from a nationwide study: for every vocational rehabilitation dollar spent, \$5 will be returned in taxes from subsequent employment of the consumer, and \$14 to \$18 will be returned to the local economy.

Moreover, says Harrington: “We serve every county in North Carolina so, for every employer, we have a local office not very far away.”

October is “National Disability Employment Awareness Month.”

For local office and other information: <http://dvr.dhhs.state.nc.us> or 1-800-689-9090

